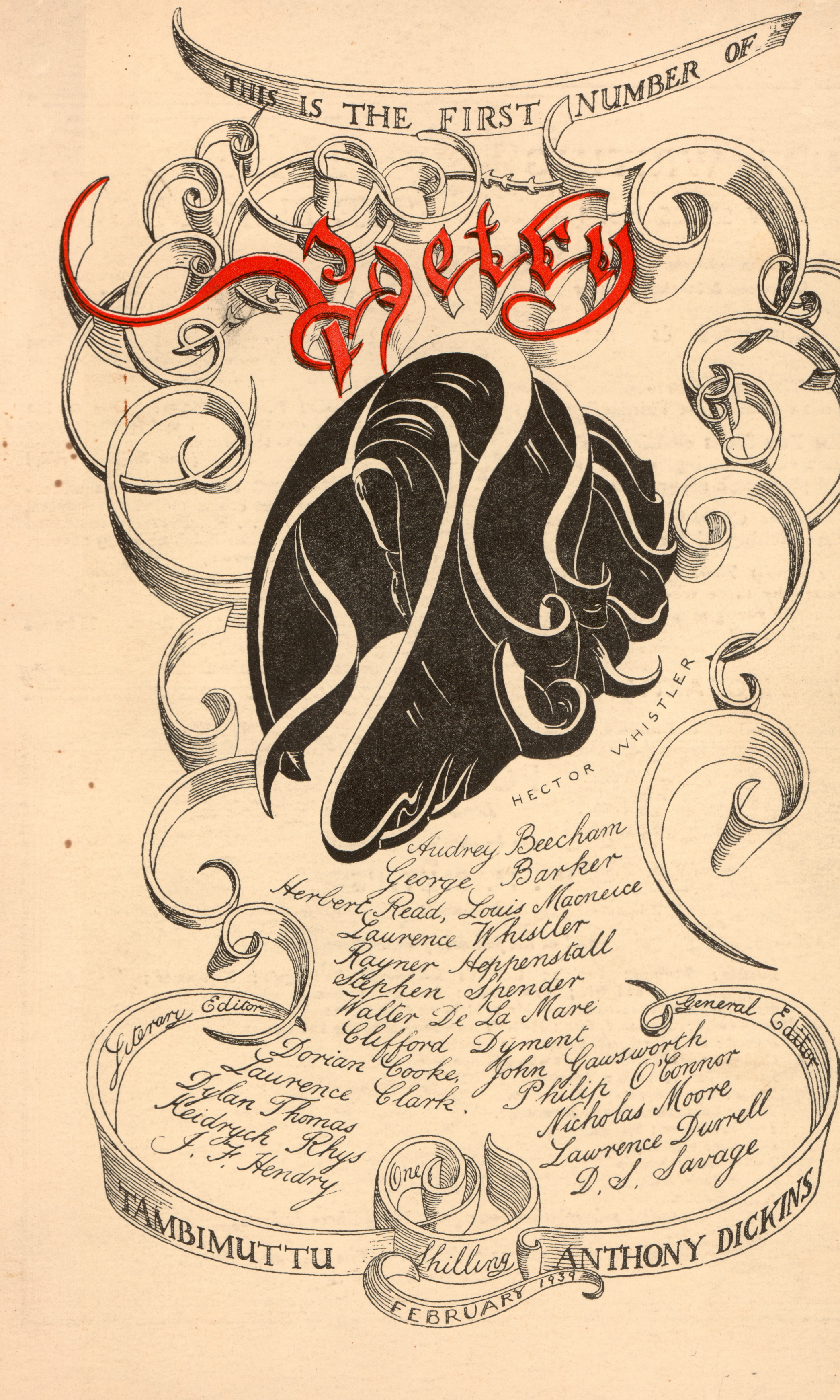

THIS IS THE FIRST NUMBER OF

Poetry

HECTOR WHISTLER

Audrey Beecham
George Barker
Herbert Read, Louis Macneice
Laurence Whistler
Rayner Heppenstall
Stephen Spender
Walter De La Mare
Clifford Dyment
Dorian Cooke, John Gawsworth
Laurence Clark. Philip O'Connor
Dylan Thomas
Keidrych Rhys
J. F. Hendry
Nicholas Moore
Lawrence Durrell
D. S. Savage

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FIRST LETTER

I wish to take my stand and I start by restating a few fundamentals, well-known enough maybe, but which seem to have been lost in the ramifications of modern thought and to need restatement for the purpose of this magazine.

Every man has poetry within him. Poetry is the awareness of the mind to the universe. It embraces everything in the world.

Of poetry are born religions, philosophies, the sense of good and evil, the desire to fight diseases and ignorance and the desire to better living conditions for humanity.

Poetry is the connection between matter and mind. Poetry is universal.

Poetry is not individual. It exists as a whole in the universal mind. It is a universal force and like God it can never be *discovered*, although it will always be present directing thought.

It can never be *discovered*, because it is a large universal thing and a man would have to write a hundred paragraphs at the same instant with a hundred hands in order to represent it truly.

For the instant a man starts to write, he ceases to live. Before he began he had the universe in him, but the very moment he put pen to paper he went into a tiny coil of intellectualization and became only partially alive.

It is this fact that the surrealists wanted to teach, but they intellectualized even this simple fact and made it into a system to discover the great force Poetry that cannot be intellectually discovered. Life and the understanding of it is surrealist, but writing about it is intellectual. Therefore it is futile to practise surrealism purposively. The very nature of it defeats its ends.

Surrealism is not a new thing, since it has always existed. It has always influenced creative activity, but to know it one has to give up all cruder attributes. To think surrealistically, spontaneously, and entirely—that is without sacrificing large portions of the mind, one would be forced to develop a finer sensibility and like the yogis dispense with cruder forms of expression, for instance the writing of poetry. At any rate, the results of the surrealist movement have shown us that the mental equipment of mankind is not yet perfect enough to practise surrealist thought. If we should ever achieve the perfection necessary to understand it, which is possible only as a hypothesis, it would be because we had persevered in our traditional form of thought.*

I have said that poetry is not individual and that one man could not analyse or formulate it.

Although a fine intellect may see the whole of poetry with its inner light, the effort of translating this vision into words splits it and only a part of the vision is transmitted. Man can transmit only part of a whole vision at a given instant.

But by the reception of many different expressions of poets, a mind that has not already *felt* the whole truth is educated to feel it. This is one of the uses of written poetry, to educate every man into this consciousness.

No man is small enough to be neglected as a poet. Every healthy man is a full vessel, though vessels are of different sizes. In a poetry magazine we can only take account of those sizes of vessels which represent humanity as a whole.

* An analogy that lends point to this statement—a few years ago cowboy films were not considered to be unreal or ridiculous; but to-day people perceive these elements in them merely because they persevered to be *within* the reality of these films until they grew out of it, and are now able to see it objectively.

From these premises it is evident that poetry is an altogether bigger thing than the intellect. The Being or soul could accommodate Poetry in an undividedness, but not the average intellect.

Vision in the Being is life. Intellectualization is only half the truth. But many half truths assembled in Being may be a true image of truth.

Since it is only through the intellect that writing is possible, the intellect is useful. But the intellect should not override Life, Being, Poetry. The intellect is a very inefficient medium between life and its expression. Intellectualization removes us further from life. Pure intellectualization is death.

Reality in life is simple. Life is simple, living is simple, the roots of thought are simple. It is only intellectualization that is complex.

Complexity is a very unreal thing ; simplicity is the only reality. By complexity I mean, not what every man cannot understand, but an abstruse theory unrelated to life.

The criticism of certain reviewers is unrelated to life; it is the manifestation of the emasculated public-school mind, where many of the natural human faculties are warped or even destroyed. Such a mind is a diseased mind. Its proper place is in a psycho-analytical clinic, not in the criticism of poetry.

The man who decries the praise of beauty or love is a pervert, an intellectual, a more than dead rabbit. Bury him.

Criticism is only valuable when it originates from life; that is, when it takes into consideration the whole fact of *living*. Criticism from certain angles, that is, abstractions, should be considered as such. They should not be imposed on humanity as new moralities that can satisfactorily order and interpret life to us.

A world without love or beauty is a disordered world. (Speaking basically, there is no ugliness in the universe, since its conception varies with each individual; beauty simply means religion and purposiveness of desire. *This emphasizes the need of a religion* or a set of assimilations in a man. Beauty for Hitler or Stalin or Confucius may be the ordering of society in a particular way. Personalities control physical life and personality can be good or evil. Each man should therefore determine for himself the nature of a personality before subjecting himself to its influence.)

If criticism has its origin in life, very little adverse criticism on modern poets need be written (if we reserve the term poet for a man who possesses a certain standard of Being and expression). Each poet is a leaf, a significant leaf, of Poetry, the multifoliate tree.

All manifestations of life are interesting; it is contrast that teaches us the nature of truth. Classicism, Romanticism, orthodoxy, heterodoxy are all necessary things and should grow together, and quite healthily, if man is going to be educated into his final more perfect consciousness.

But the glorification of one of these for its own sake, as the whole truth, and its acceptance by an uncritical mind, leads to confusion and partial mental atrophy.

It is not the glorification of a part of Being as the whole that I object to ; such a state is indeed inevitable in a creative artist. But I certainly do object to its acceptance by critics who thereafter endeavour to dope all humanity with it.

The function of a critic should be to point out to what extent a poet's work is a half truth.

Dylan Thomas is a great poet and he glorifies a thoroughly personal form of analysis and exposition. The creative artist is justified in doing this when the form is born of an inner necessity in himself. But many of the younger poets make Dylan Thomas' necessity theirs too, when the work they produce shows plainly that they have uncritically wedded their minds to an attractive 'idea', where it continues to jar and hamper their expression. I have printed one or two of these poets in this issue. I hope they will soon sift themselves from Dylan Thomas.

I do not say that Dylan Thomas' necessity could not be another's. I merely point out that I have not yet recognized the Thomas-necessity in any of his imitators. I shall write more on this subject on another occasion.

Every poet is a culmination of influences. He is a *culmination*, not merely one of the influences. In other words he does not disturb his natural culmination with the deliberate apposition of another man's Being on his own to an unreasonable extent.

One may question whether it is possible to determine if a man is his own natural culmination or not. This is only possible by comparing him with others. All values are arrived at by comparison.

Walter de la Mare, Clifford Dyment, W. H. Davies, Stephen Spender, Louis MacNeice and Dylan Thomas are natural culminations. When the culminations are of the same type there are of course differences in stature.

Some of the others like Nicholas Moore, yet an undergraduate, Laurence Clark and Maurice Rowdon show that they are healthy; but we expect them to digest more influences in order to culminate significantly.

Others, like Philip O'Connor (a clever caricaturist) or Dorian Cooke (who in a riot of imagery can see things clearly, but refuses to) hide a significant self underneath a mass of alien influences that ought to be scraped away.

Gavin Ewart's poem in this number marks his breaking away from the Auden influence (which I must say he had digested) and his beginning an apprenticeship with Spender, an important point in favour of Gavin Ewart, for it shows that he is aware of opposites, and that he is not one to be isolated in an intellectual rut.

I have mentioned that living is really simple. Men should realize that all social problems can be solved on a very simple basis.

When disordered minds rail at simplicity, it is because they are disordered. Let every man look at his navel for a time each day and find out his own nature, his wants, the feelings that go to make him and his reactions to fundamental things like oppression and libertinism.

If he knew himself, he would know what would be his reactions to different circumstances. He would then be the touchstone to the goodness or evil in the world.

He would know that his primary wants were freedom in thought and action, justice, order, love, entertainment and a presence of beauty. He would then be able to accept or reject political doctrines by deciding whether they were the negation of liberty and of the *human factor* or not.

The trouble with the modern world is that it has no *real* beliefs or religion. Poetry is religion. Poetry makes the world tangible to us and enables us to preserve order in it.

Poetry may prepare the way for better politics, but it is not entirely political propaganda, as the Stalinists conceive it. Poetry is a descent to the roots of life.

Modern men do not face reality. They do not face themselves. They fight away from simple statements and feelings. It is fashionable to be complex, dead, to appear confused, be unsure about everything, be *negative*. Because of the influx of many different theories into the world, they imagine that they should show an awareness to all of them, so they affect confusion and are negative. Men should be *positive, alive*.

The circular that we issued a short while ago announced that this magazine would be an 'Enquiry into Modern Verse'. I hope that I have preserved the true spirit of an enquiry in this issue by printing the different types of poetry being written to-day, each of which has its own particular significance. Many of the poems may seem 'difficult' to the reader, but I may mention that much of the complexity is derived from the nature of the contents, and that the reader would find a careful study very profitable. In this context I may recommend for study the extract from *Autumn Journal* by Louis MacNeice and Stephen Spender's "Variations on my Life," published in this issue, which are effective pictures of the post-war man struggling for spiritual recovery. In certain poems the difficulty is due to metaphysical conceits, without any apparent purpose, but mental acrobatics, in which the writer imitates another man in whom this technique was born originally of an inner necessity. I propose to write on this subject on another occasion.

The four poems by Lawrence Durrell and Nicholas Moore, and the "Sonnet" by Maurice Rowdon also plead, as I have, that life and living are really simple, and not so complex as the many different theories about them would make us believe. These are some of the younger poets writing to-day. Lawrence Durrell for instance writes, "the curious sea . . . swings in the heart of things to dumb our volumes of philosophy".

I feel that an introduction to Dylan Thomas's poem may not be out of place.

It describes the feelings of a man, in his father's house on the sea-shore, expecting the birth of a child to his wife. Under the stress of expectation he notices the landscape, spasmodically, and the words he uses to describe his feelings show us that he is conscious of things around him hitting and hurting him (chucked bells; wound-down cough; puzzle in a bed of sores; bullies into rough seas you so gentle). Also that he sees violence everywhere (the stained flats of heaven hit and razed; whirring featherlands; wind-heeled foot in the hole of a fireball; cut Christbread spitting vinegar and all; flames and shells). After the birth of the child he realizes that "agony has another mouth to feed" and that bad economic conditions have "already murdered" the child: finally he praises all these sensations he has felt, because of this experience in his life:

> "Cry joy that this witchlike midwife second
> Bullies into rough seas you so gentle."

The poems in this magazine have been arranged in unnumbered groups, not with a particular view to classifying them, but to facilitate their communication to the general reader. No doubt common qualities are present within these groups. It must, however, be remembered that the place a poet occupies in these groups is only arbitrary in relation to the bulk of his writings.

TAMBIMUTTU

THE MARCH ISSUE OF
POETRY
(LONDON)
WILL CONTAIN

The Human Situation:
A LONG POEM
BY
STEPHEN SPENDER

A WINDOW TO MOVEMENT

Lift the lashes of dark eyes
To the fading scene my dear,
Twilight's gentle page of lies ;
The rooks are crossing fabulous snow
And when you watch them they appear
To stand, and the fading hills to flow.

For a gap in the hills a train is feeling,
Drawing its pencil of lights away—
Remember that in all love's dealing,
The shy encounter at the pavement's end,
The lyrical hour, the lovable trait,
Time has the takings, it's you that spend.

Yet look upon the moving scene,
Lift your delicate chin to this.
What should fevered journeys mean,
Moving bird or moving hill,
To the favoured where love is
Sufficient unto itself, and still ?

LAURENCE WHISTLER

'HERE LIES . . .'

Think kindly of me. A Tasmanian snake
Clings so insensately to life, 'tis said,
That even its skin, dried, brined, will reawake
At secret lure, and spectral scalings shed.

Haply this falling dust beneath . . . ? O friend,
Should'st thou some faint far sweetness here perceive,
Unwonted radiance, hush—its call attend:
The all of praise to God mere dust can give.

WALTER DE LA MARE

THE DEAD JAY

A witless, pert, bedizened fop—
Man scoffs—resembles you;
But, here and there, a prince of such
Proves rascal through and through:
And sorrowing simple birds agree
It is his nature to.

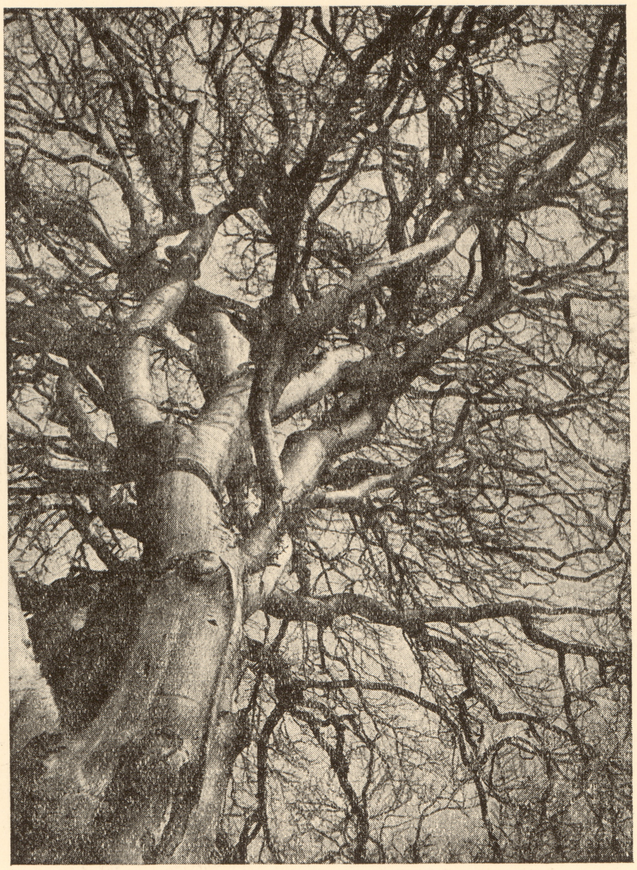
Then may the wind blow bleak, my friend,
And tap a crazed tattoo,
Nature—habit—instinct—grace?
Not mine, I fear, the clue.
Yet 'tis not wholly sentiment
That bids a cold Yahoo
Grieve as he drinks from death-stilled wing
That miracle of blue.

WALTER DE LA MARE

THE LADY

She perches on
A square foot of chair,
And delicately swings
An attractive leg.
A metronomic finger
Operates upon her cigarette,
And in the proper places
She laughs moderately.
The hammer striking on the girder,
And the niggers in the sun,
Suggest furs and a quiet square,
But the dogs in the flowery gardens
Do not suck oranges.
To a lady
Life is four o'clock.

CLIFFORD DYMENT



Photograph by Edwin Smith

SONG

A lovely woman is a tree
Whose branches touch infinity,
Embracing you, enlacing me.

Around our hearts her ivies creep,
Throughout our veins her resins seep
Till we are in her dreamless sleep.

Wake slowly in that dim green bed ;
Wake slowly and be comforted:
Who dies in beauty is not dead.

JOHN GAWSWORTH

DICTATOR

I am Legend.
I am History.
My *jugend*
Is mystery.

Out of Chaos—
Into worse!
No Taos*
Dims my curse:

I reject gardens
Even of spirit.
My spleen hardens
With my merit.

I am Death and Gehenna,
Co-Tyrant of Ravenna.
No dog bites but I flay,
No man slights but I slay.

JOHN GAWSWORTH

***Taos*: In New Mexico. 'I believe one must somehow bring together the two ends of humanity, our own thin end, and the last dark strand from the previous pre-white era. I verily believe that. Is Taos the place?'—*D. H. Lawrence.*

SONNET*

With a sullen manipulation of thinking power
My frowning mentality darts to the storm
Which habit has coolly termed ' living ' – an hour
Of competitive snarls and embraces of form :
Your cool reception of every pleasure,
Your disinclination to dwell on the reason,
The draining-away of your minutes of leisure,
The shooting passage of season by season . . .
The subtler conceptions you display as the truth,
Your lingering passion for studied applause,
Are secret asylums for hatred of death,
The concatenations of life and its laws.

So our hollow voices echo the cry
That slowly existence is passing by.

MAURICE ROWDON

* The author is 16 years old and this is his first published poem.

PRELUDE

One who has not achieved
Tranquillity of spirit
As of October ponds
Beneath this grey-blue sky,
Now the great trees are unleaving;
One who has not created,
As yet, from the fibres full
Of intellectual energy
Either works or their complement,
A satisfactory life;
One whose primitive muscle
Or daemon has thrust on
In unco-ordinated enthusiasm
His days with a too much love
For things like water,
Or mountains flanked with heather,
Or Alpine ice tight at dawn,
Or waves' tumultuous emphasis
Flung down on Atlantic shores—
Such a one
Incomplete, though haunted
By a single simple vision
Native to his mind,
Huge and all-embracing as
A pacific ocean around
All separated shores;
Such brings to you these poems,
Fragments of coloured glass
Out of his laboratory
For forging new windows of soul;
Not as the achievements
But as the first ludicrous experiments,
As sparse and sporadic earnests of
An unembodied idea
Which his vigilance would realize—
To mirror for you at last
That human being, of which all kings
And queens were brittle symbols.

LAURENCE CLARK

PER FRETUM FEBRIS

At the shriek of dawn, my darling hunter
Woke from the sea's white smoke

From the pit of ambush, the tumbled billow
Struck to death the kite of love
The fake-belief false swallow.

AUDREY BEECHAM

EMBLEM

In measure and in marksmanship
  lies the exactitude of death :
Through the neat red wound on the pale brow
  the bullet has driven a path.

With calliper and compass
  and a straight divided rule
The Arab made the rose a rosette
  to prove himself a fool.

Beauty has no other reason
  than the eye can indicate ;
Alone the virgin birth
  is immaculate.

HERBERT READ

PROLEGOMENON

In this conspiracy a master mind,
Mechanic tyrant rivets ends and means,
Black engine-fate records the heart-beat hours,
The slow awareness of an end foretold:
This would I thwart, and new-born chance invoke,
—My freedom, yours, our adamantine will,
To build a living barricade of faith,
A bastion thrust against encroaching night,
Its gallows, pulleys, and impartial axe.

GEORGE REAVEY

VARIATIONS ON MY LIFE

THE FIRST

To knock and enter
Knock and enter
The cloudless posthumous door
Where the slack guts are drawn into taut music
And there to sit and speak
With those who went before;

And to be justified
At last being at their side
To know I have no quality
Of ultimate inferiority
But bear on rounded shoulders the weight of my humanity;

To look down on my life
And see a life
Sociable puppet painted with a mouth
And to give the mouth a voice
That is not death
But its own truth confessing its own justice;

And to accept
My own weakness beyond dispute
Which is the strength I reject
Reaching back to the past with a dark root
Where earth and womb connect.

. . . .

There is never enough air
There is never a wide enough space
There is never a white enough light
There is never a three-dimensional paper
Where the praise may loop like an aeroplane:

To knock and enter
Knock and enter
The room white as paper
With light falling on a white space
Through high windows of power
On hands resting on the controlling table
Hands severed from the wrists
Moving only with the thoughts in fingers;

And to find release
From the continual headache
And the necessity of such long journeys;
The necessity of being alone
And the never being alone
Away from the lighted cities of the brain;

To touch and kiss
The gold horizon of the withheld wish;
To enter the flower of those who fructify
And fall and fade in the night full of desire;
To know the physical enduring secret
Strength whispers to the acrobat;

And to enter
The cold frigate voyaging to despair:
For this also is life, this also
Is the journey to the wonderful snow.
What hunger! And what distances!
Here is far more than coldness
That so illumines the whole surface !
Here is the crystal microscopic rose
That out of the frozen nerve grows.

Oh but to ride on
The whole quivering human machine !
Less efficient than an aeroplane
Rather, a feathered, artificial bird
Which hardly flies but holds our lives
In all its love.
Oh to be taken by it, and to hold
My ear against its ever-female heart,
And to accept its fleas and all its sins
To explore all its gifts
And nothing, nothing to refuse.

To say I love and I forgive
And that I know all that I hold;
Never to slide
Away among the drawing-rooms and hatred
From what it gives—
That is to walk in a sacred grove

And pluck the ripened voices with their ears
Bound into sheaves filled with the sun
Of summers that spoke and then went on;
And among them to place
My own posthumous voice
Which nothing does refuse
And only death denies.

VARIATIONS ON MY LIFE

THE SECOND

. . . Or to return
To the first loved friend, you
Whose life seemed most unlike my own
As though you existed on an island
In seas of an archaic time,
Hidden under birdsong and olive trees,
With eyes chiselled to reflect the sky,
And behind the blue the clear flame,
And the hoarded quietness
Of summer at evening that surrounds a wood
Loaded with thunder,
Whose gentleness withholds a core of anger,
The night and tiger.

If I could return
And with a gained balance of happiness,
The scales of a golden success,
Smile and reassure you and undo the unhappiness
I wound around us then;
If I had a common Midas touch,
The fingers of an electric sign—
As I remember you stood once
In the tar-streaked drizzling street
With the light on your hair,
Smile painted by a day
That was neither yours nor mine.

And if I could cease to demand,
As I asked then,
I know not what demonstrable favour

Nor what invented want,
For I have this to offer—
I was the sea, I was the island
Where the casqued heroic head
Lay and was remembered;
My innocent crystal mirrored your heart
My mind was your legendary sky of love.

If I could accept
Myself in those in whose
Sweetness my life dissolves
And trust they could accept
Themselves in me; nor fear
Their expert quick disfavour
At the way I frown or hold my head;
Nor the smiling easy rivals
In whose faces the South winds blow,
And who become most serious
When the night and dance revolve;

O, then my body would enter
Its island and its summer
The questions find their answer
And my head its resting-place
Where the other heart lies
Washed by the seas of blood
Under the trees and clouds
And the healing sky
Of the breast's breathing space.

And I would know the peace
Of some distant frequent face
Seen in the street or train,
Full of withheld promise,
Which out of rapid day
Enters the tunnel of my dream
Endowed with every wish
And then is dragged away
Into rapid day again.

STEPHEN SPENDER

TWO KISSES

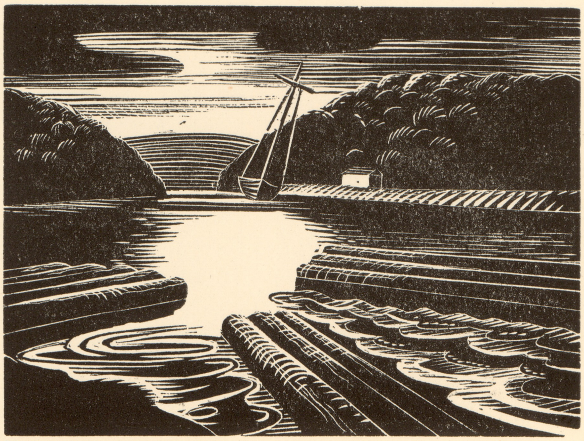
I wear your kiss like a feather
Laid upon my cheek
And I wander to the quay where the river
Suggests suggests

The dirt off all the streets
And the rotting feet of factories,
But the swans and boats and corks ride
The buoyant running waters
And the eye is carried by a tide

To the far shore and day-green spaces,
And the ear is gently belied
By sounds under dreams beneath the roar outside.
And then the heart in its white sailing pride

Launches among the swans and the stretched lights
Laid on the water, as on your cheek
The other kiss and my listening
Life, waiting for all your life to speak.

STEPHEN SPENDER



Engraving by Diana Gardner

SECTION TWO OF 'AUTUMN JOURNAL'

Spider, spider, twisting tight—
  But the watch is wary beneath the pillow—
I am afraid in the web of night
  When the window is fingered by the shadows of branches,
When the lions roar beneath the hill
  And the meter clicks and the cistern bubbles
And the gods are absent and the men are still—
  Noli me tangere, my soul is forfeit.
Some now are happy in the hive of home,
  Thigh over thigh and a light in the night nursery,
And some are hungry under the starry dome
  And some sit turning handles.
Glory to God in the Lowest, peace beneath the earth,
  Dumb and deaf at the nadir;
I wonder now whether anything is worth
  The eyelid opening and the mind recalling.
And I think of Persephone gone down to dark,
  No more a virgin, gone the garish meadow,
But why must she come back, why must the snowdrop mark
  That life goes on for ever?
There are nights when I am lonely and long for love
  But tonight is quintessential dark forbidding
Anyone beside or below me; only above
  Pile high the tumulus, good-bye to starlight.
Good-bye the Platonic sieve of the Carnal Man
  But good-bye also Plato's philosophising ;
I have a better plan
  To hit the target straight without circumlocution.
If you can equate Being in its purest form
  With denial of all appearance,
Then let me disappear—the scent grows warm
  For pure Not-Being, Nirvana.
Only the spider spinning out his reams
  Of colourless thread says Only there are always
Interlopers, dreams,
  Who let no dead dog lie nor death be final;
Suggesting, while he spins, that tomorrow will outweigh
  Tonight, that Becoming is a match for Being,

That tomorrow is also a day,
  That I must leave my bed and face the music.
As all the others do who with a grin
  Shake off sleep like a dog and hurry to desk or engine
And the fear of life goes out as they clock in
  And history is reasserted.
Spider, spider, your irony is true;
  Who am I—or I—to demand oblivion?
I must go out to-morrow as the others do
  And build the falling castle;
Which has never fallen, thanks
  Not to any formula, red tape or institution,
Not to any creeds or banks,
  But to the human animal's endless courage.
Spider, spider, spin
Your register and let me sleep a little,
Not now in order to end but to begin
  The task begun so often.

LOUIS MACNEICE

BIOGRAPHY OF ORPHEUS-APOLLO

I was walking down Kensington High Street
Recalling the occasion when at Bournemouth
William Wordsworth accosted me in the street,
Remembering also the time at Minterne Magna
When Edmund my Spenser spoke to me of Truth,
Generally reflecting upon coincidence, when stranger
My imagination than, Orpheus-Apollo
Took my arm and said to me Follow.

Remembering Virgil who had the run of Hell
Revealing visions to my grand parent, I
Kept at his heel as he lead me to Notting Hill.
Here he halted and as he did so I saw
History crashing its ratios in his eye.
He glanced up. I attended and he said,
I am perfectly aware that I ought to be dead,
Therefore I bring you here to hear me die.

Why here, I answered, Notting Hill has pansies,
Prostitutes, cinemas, cafes, but no tomb.
I come here, he said, because the bright frenzies
Of whores and pansies, the dark songs in cafes,
The angel in the cinema, go to form
Song and dance sketches of my life.
I come here, he continued, Orpheus-Apollo,
To find a life and make a death follow.

Trapped and trammelled in life from that
Appalling morning when I dropped on Mount
Rydal or Olympus from God's throat,
Poet I was on whom grief spun its point.
Life for a word is grief. I can count
Grief on my body like a smother of leaf
Under which, crushed like birds, I lie
Dying the agony which will not die.

Lyrics like cups I tried in which to catch
That Freudian poison, to drain from
My horrible body on its bed of ache.
Love I tried like heroin, but found
Life dogged me there, gazing out with my face
From the girl's guts. I was bound
By flesh on the fire of my own fate
But never my ash fell to the ground.

I am not me, for I am you—
Orpheus-Apollo the so-called poet.
The finger of the fire I knew
Writes life on your back in pain.
Wordsworth's age, turning to salt like Lot's,
Marlowe's dragon-fly pinned against death,
These make two of my postures of pain,
That I shall suffer again, suffer again.

But I'm you and the hundred succeeding you's,
Except I die here by the axles of cars, or
Unlikely lightning. I'm brimming with the terrible blues
Love cannot make gold or poems dye with words.
Too much life, too much life makes sore
Like too much love. O wear widow weeds
My world, for me to-night. I'm coming home,
Poems I have written, to your empty rooms.
Then he stopped speaking, and I saw him die.

GEORGE BARKER

AMBIVALENCE

Say always some impotence behind our footsteps,
Though much sweet music in a world of discord,
And beauty must be gone, no kiss remembered,
The long sleep of the blood, come to no good,
And love remembered bitter in the mouth,
Lust indeterminate in the panting haze.

Oh! but the hungry tongue revolts
And the tired eyes grow sad,
Deep in the feathered families,
So passionately loved and hated.
All wit has one despair its deepest root
From childhood learned and wishes are not granted,
Life round some central pivot makes pursuit,
The ghosts of wishes where the wish has haunted.

One that one loved could say that word but now
The word is still unsaid and all confusion;
Everything convention could allow
Leaving me cold and far from my illusion,
No dreamed-of face can walk the light of day,
Light is too strong and dreams fade into sadness,
The fixed regard that looks the other way
Only leads on to bitterness and madness;
I love and hate my lovers in the past
Remembering them in an uneasy silence
And in a sea of love they form as islands
Because ambivalence still holds me fast.

GAVIN EWART

AND THE FIRE MUSIC

Till I wedded it to the tune that my own life beats
And taught you to lie down and breathe and know yourself fair
This body was with Lawrence, Tchekhov and Keats,
Delicate spirits that refuse the air.

Unable to do more I make three stanzas now
For all those whose closed lungs have given the tubercle leave
To have its will of them, airy spirits that know
In their bodies too the brave abyss. Believe

That I would not kill you of the plague again
As the barren reaches of Wales did once and love of a father
Or as Gracchus in his will to be more killed Catherine
And Flavia after. You live now. I leave you rather.

RAYNER HEPPENSTALL

MNEMONIC

Saturn claimeth as his due
Oak, mespilus, hellebore, rue
And such narcotics as are both
Of crass substance and slow growth.

Laurel and sandal-wood Jupiter's be,
With cinnamon, balsam and the incense-tree.

Pepper, ginger and scammony,
Colocynthus, euphorby,
Jalap and the hot mustard
Take their quality from Mars.

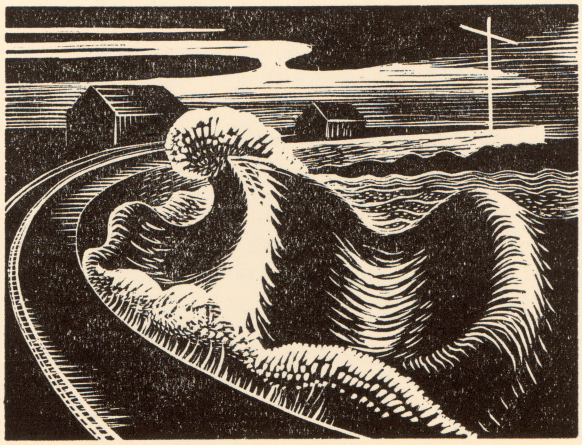
Heliotrope, rosemary, crocus and palm,
All aromatics aspire to the Sun.

In Venus's lodge do roses entwine
With peas and lily, the olive and pine.

Mercury too changeful of toil
Hath but corylus and millefoil.

Moon hath lettuce, apple and pear,
Swelleth out gourd and cucumber.

RAYNER HEPPENSTALL



Engraving by Diana Gardner

HOMAGE TO A SPLIT MAN

There are almost a thousand legends about him,
Some twisted out of all shape, preserved by toper, very odd
And handed down as gospel by the playboys of that period
Who somehow missed his mental strife and evident dual shim-sham.

Perhaps even the early facts are strange enough though true.
Blank birth in one of the four hotels ; loathing both Eton and, still more,
Oxford : loving Cologne and music like a child upon sea shore
That just simply would rather throw up modern ships of war than animals for the Zoo.

To several novelists he looked wholly hideous ; rain washed him clean.
He pub-crawled on the damages ! His railing against chemical beer
Often upset police courts next morning as much as the Cafe Royal leer
And in-dense-air swig; against inward edge, a mere saint; then a singer without a bean.

Accordingly his legend grew and grew: his women rhyming and drinking.
His curious friends in the Paris studio; his fierce swilling in the country,
Unless you say it was his Elizabethan self, outside this dreary blasphemy,
Worshipping exquisite blue-black devils and perverse with heroin and morphine.

Of sly song; but generous as a duke; a fiend in the ninth circle.
No, he never smoked; yet barred to burrs; always a man for sitting among
Dark evasions; tie askew; oh so changed! Jenny Lind is pinned
On those greeting walls; here a quick one; here a rhyme; still longing for the throng.

And the high dance; and the songs, published; and the paper he ran
Are all part of ghost searching half-starved through an artist's ploughshare
And now his drunkard rows in Chelsea over don enemies do reveal quite a split man,
Double remove from toughs with knuckle-dusters in a four ale bar.

Without a model in flux, he stuffed his shade; distorted, misunderstood, but news,
Actually suffered few d.t's; preferred red cats to barmaids swift with lunches—was
Sought after, praised perfection in many ways; only late on found every child pretty gross.
Guess. What was it? money? or sense of failure? did he turn on the gas?

KEIDRYCH RHYS

EPITAPH

Here lies Michael of the small bone.
The pride of the lion is gone home.
God lend our England such a one.

A knight's memoriam is only love.
So Michael with his dog on his leg
To his sweet Vicar is gone above.

His loyalty was better than the people's mud.
His going down on the jaw of the common dog,
This was a godly fellow's manoeuvre.

His breath as pure as the great oven of Mary.
He spoke to God with the tongue of great bell.
They taste his humour at the centre of the world.

Michael the Englishman of the small bone,
Simple and pure as water in a spoon,
God lend our England such a one.

LAWRENCE DURRELL

ISLAND FUGUE

(to my wife)

When here two candid statues lie
Under an anæsthetic sun,
Re-element the world of Donne,
O drink the enormous sky.

The blue, the cool, the curious sea,
Her blunt mesmeric pendulum
Swings in the heart of things to dumb
Our volumes of philosophy.

Marriage of water with a fin:
A salt, a silence absolute
Seems eloquent as flesh and mute
As Grecian sea's blue skin.

The ocean, bodyguard of graves,
Utters no psalm for travellers,
No canticle for mariners—
Only dumb shrapnel in the caves.

Confess, the limbs are loving-stuff.
The island's sickle, gold on blue,
The lizard and the turtle too
Are furniture enough.

Rough is the black sun's morning breath,
When, dumbed, our statues on the beach,
My loving fingers scarcely reach
Beneath the bones to death.

The dolphin and the silken seal,
Touching the circle of the blue,
Lope by and try to speak to you,
But seldom utter what they feel.

The elements in sum are we.
The gryphon or the submarine,
Aquarian dawdlers intervene
Across the reefs of memory.

Beyond the accidents of hazard
Your treasonable flesh be true.
This doze of olive be our hue,
And love as ageless as the lizard.

The green sea's buds are only ships.
Dare the hypnotic blue to ask
An answer from your Saxon mask
To the barbaric world's eclipse.

Here plants have no biography,
Only transparent water's will,
By chemistry to fill and fill
The green assertion of the tree.

Confess, the wheel should turn no faster.
Time like the dead skin of a snake
Peels down without the addict's ache
With daylight for a dancing-master.

Or when these dusky statues lie,
Under the pollen of a star,
Concede the crossing of the bar,
And drink the continual sky.

For, loving all, but one the most,
When grim the moon's pure death-car paces
Over our long and sleeping faces,
I lie beside my ghost.

She tips the cypress' silver trigger —
Nor the exploding dawn can wake
The tiny breathings that we take,
With features imitating *rigor*.

We are such dwellers as the tides
Push up along the turning planet,
Who love as lonely as the gannet,
And where the choric blue divides.

Then let this ballet-dress called you
Propound its axioms by the score.
The Raven answers: 'Nevermore,'
To all we be or do.

LAWRENCE DURRELL
Corfu, 1938

ABSENT CREATION

I wait for wonder, or the weather's turn
To teach my tongue to wind its tangled skein
Of loss, or love; lilt out its awkward words
Or learn a rhythm from the weaving rain.

I await that ease and excellence of mind
That intimates suave movement to the hand,
Letting the typewriter shuttle off its lines
To a slow march, or stately sarabande.

But time and tide-turn, running past the ear,
Seethe with distraction on a wasting sound,
The hour-sands plunge, my fingers plough through care,
I hear an endless clock thud under ground.

Upon this desert coast, this sea exanimate,
Lord, burst a cyclone, or a soothing rain,
Detonate dams, flood cities, souse or intoxicate
That I may live, and feel, and speak again!

D. S. SAVAGE

THE RARE POET . . .

The rare poet achieves in a
Moment the distinct shape of a poem, takes
Word and word and puts them lip to
Lip, creates love from them; the child
Banging his fist upon the dinner-table, the vision.

This is his world, the steaming egg, the
Teapot wrapped in its cover; he
Shrieks for more, his fingers sticky with
Jam. Why do you take the poem, mother,
And break it into pieces like the shell of an egg?

The child is always asking questions:
Do you love this world, he says, this
Daily habit of breakfast, eggs and
Toast, the morning paper, scandal, crises
And the interminable dulness of your love ?

NICHOLAS MOORE

IT IS BETTER . . .

It is better that I dally with angels,
Taking them to peaks of fire, with life,
And teach them among the green woods the clever
Ways of love and the little preliminaries.
It is better not to trouble them with grief.

If they cook acorns in a forest fire
And carol and dance to the tunes of wind in trees,
It is like children, and the day is gay,
And the gates of heaven are open to all our fears,
And the grey worlds are far away.

So come with me, my darling, and leave this
Too lately conscience-stricken earth.
When it grows tired of wars and battles
It too will consort with angels
And learn the easy preliminaries to birth.

NICHOLAS MOORE

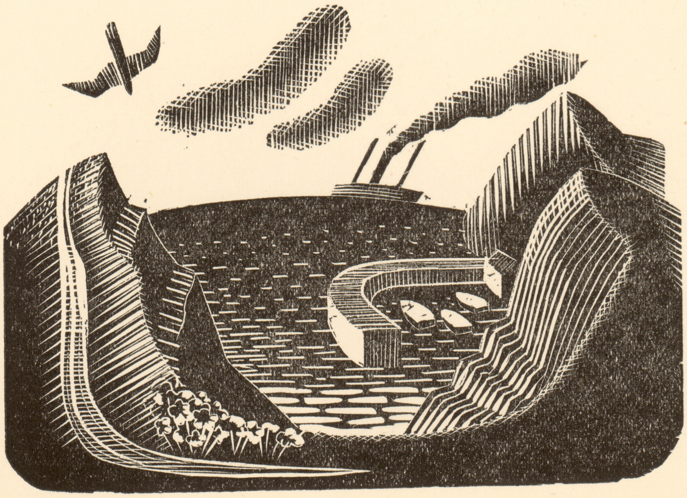
POEM IN THE NINTH MONTH

A saint about to fall,
The stained flats of heaven hit and razed
To the kissed kite hems of his shawl,
On the last street wave praised
The unwinding, song by rock,
Of the woven wall
Of his father's house in the sands,
The vanishing of the musical ship-work and the chucked bells,
The wound down cough of the blood-counting clock
Behind a face of hands,
On the angelic etna of the last whirring featherlands,
Wind-heeled foot in the hole of a fireball,
Hymned his shrivelling flock,
On the last rick's tip by sucked wine-wells
Sang heaven hungry and the quick
Cut Christbread spitting vinegar and all
The mazes of his praise and envious tongue were worked in flames and shells.

Glory cracked like a flea.
The sun-leaved holy candlewoods
Drivelled down to one singeing tree
With a stub of black buds,
The sweet, fish-gilled boats bringing blood
Lurched through a scuttled sea
With a hold of leeches and straws,
Heaven fell with his fall and one crocked bell beat the left air.
O wake in me in my house in the mud
Of the crotch of the squawking shores,
Flicked from the carbolic city puzzle in a bed of sores
The scudding base of the familiar sky,
The lofty roots of the clouds.
From an odd room in a split house stare,
Milk in your mouth, at the sour floods
That bury the sweet street slowly, see
The skull of the earth is barbed with a war of burning brains and hair.

Strike in the time-bomb town,
Raise the live rafters of the eardrum,
Throw your fear a parcel of stone
Through the dark asylum,
Lapped among herods wail
As their blade marches in
That the eyes are already murdered,
The stocked heart is forced, and agony has another mouth to feed.
O wake to see, after a noble fall,
The old mud hatch again, the horrid
Woe drip from the dishrag hands and the pressed sponge of the forehead,
The breath draw back like a bolt through white oil
And a stranger enter like iron.
Cry joy that this witchlike midwife second
Bullies into rough seas you so gentle
And makes with a flick of the thumb and sun
A thundering bullring of your silent and girl-circled island.

DYLAN THOMAS



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CHILDREN

A little girl struggling
to grip bright
grapes with her bare, her grumbling teeth
is a shock of light thirsty
for daft light, thing of flowers
and limitless optical adventure. That white blade
of being with the vulpine teeth
whose successful corrosion of a greater
clarity than hers splits
the ball rimmed with vermin
of reactionary, faintly wobbling sleep and darts
a startling needle at an expectant rink tightly
awaiting glad destruction—does in our hungry eyes
shoot a group of multi-coloured fires
into the ovoid, intellectual night. The kid
whose teeth bathe in the uncomfortable toffee
has a body of expanding fieryness, swells
like a song's balloon of sound
up into the dome of our real thinking. Chucks
the bar and damns the world
in a haughty, well-done paddle on the pavement,
kicking with powerful heels, making a dive
into the school's wool. There's the old skein of it
Collett, beginning a serious unwinding. Gee
these old prophets
with over-sized arses do
make a clammy plunging down
a harmless kid's ears. Where did
the muddle come from ? And like a gang
get away
in the thin door: excess of his motion
brings his mother's biting shrieks
of command on him. Sulkened and sobered
and cramped like a mole, he forces

through the bread-and-butter and fluffy jam. Through
the strange air to bed. To slip
down glass-walled shafts and be interviewed
by devils and gentlemen with very controlled faces
and by muddled faces, like mis-dished omelettes,
of worried women. He, pillar-box
to letters of protests
stands dumb, cold and alone
on a pavement.

PHILIP O'CONNOR

HEATHEN HILL

(This is a section of a long poem)

The sky is man on Heathen Hill. There is a ghost wind of blood
Turning its cyclone on the metal faces, acting cutworm
To the sprouting bones. Which is anguish in the dazzling inch ?
Which are the rivets forged with leather hands? The crankled dust makes
Brittle the hymen wobbling in black moonsets, and topples hard
Over scarred edges of mountains where the wide man-sister strikes
Its hair in bloody thongs. Red flies have nested under its arms:
It shrieks in big wind's absence for its man-mother's feet:
"The needle of dust has sharpened its fillets on my spilt heart.
My male breasts cannot give suck, hugging dry wells for candle ends."

And demons round its voice huddled in beast pupil of cyclone:
"Cork your paps and stitch the passage to the womb with wimpled wire!"
They grinned obscene destruction in their tails and made a harvest
From nine needles of bleached dust, higgledy-piggledy grinding
The fillets on a burning whetstone sucked back from sloping sheathes . . .
Not tortoises on harelipped grain shelving bonegums out of stark.
Man-mother is filthy dead; its tongue is two blunt stones. The sky
Is man on Heathen Hill shifting too loud in the grey eye's scourge.
Blind infants crawl on mutilated wedges, and call again
To the whirligig of man-mother, man-sister and demons.

On a hunch under the earth stands the timeless clock. Two great hands,
Symbol of scissors in a hurtled hour, point rainbow signals
On the telegraph way. Down, down, down, deep drawn in the dug drain
Ambiguous they hunger strips from the ripped flange, milk signposts
On the full prism's glass. More wheels stomach the bulge than looted sand.
No time in the ticking brain, on face, or in those hands shaking
Each quick, beheaded gash to the rythm of jazz. Once drop on drop,
Like bleeding lightning from a snow-swung sky, mud-minutes poured out
Stains on to the wrestling sheets, and man-mother huge with an hour
Heaved round the empty corner and loosened long acres of shame.

DORIAN COOKE

From ' AN ODE TO A COTTON-TOWN '

In this valley of wool the stone crabs treadmill suncotton
Churches held up spirally on spit of sin-spittooned shale;
And grass, a green sailor, lies drowned in the silt-toppling halls
Of glossy, concrete-cabled sea, where stones spell stillbound ripples.

They paste desire up wasting walls where prinking mannas preen
Hint furry posturings, and colours call like dancehaunt doors
Apostasy of lip, loll of hip, shaping emphasis
On parasite's complacent leap from moon-man into sleep.

Now their yawning towers of smoke across the rigid land
Are leaning fire; their miners' rocking cages plunder bones.
A finger touch, and trundling insects burrow into men
The hunger hatched in each kindling its blind burial.

We in cooling-tower are broken eggshells in sink damp.
A killing fear of the sky's cracking makes us air-raid-warden
A torn-up lake of fired clouds. And a greenish rain pours in
Upon us like running sewers through a balloon limp-sunk.

J. F. HENDRY

POETRY AND LIFE

It seems that the "I" of every person is like a signature which sets the key for his vibrations to experience, selecting from the chaos of existence that harmony which is recognized as peculiar to that person, and which constitutes his character. Each of us is a small universe within the greater, operating from a personal logic which has its relation to the world's larger structure. So it is with poets; but the poet is faced with the double task of assimilating and ordering his experience and of projecting it imaginatively and formally into verbal structures. Nevertheless, it is only in this specialized activity that the poet as such is distinguishable from those who are not poets—and of course in his possibly more acute awareness of the entire process.

Man being the highest creature in the biological-spiritual scale, "the point at which the universe becomes aware of itself," it follows that the known world, the world of consciousness, is of an anthropomorphic character; nor could it possibly be otherwise. Blake's "the human form divine" is the standard to which all human activity must be related.

Poetry, fiction, criticism—what are all these, in so far as they are of real value, but autobiographical experiments, soundings of experience and selections from it made to harmonize with the personal logic of the poet, critic or novelist? All of these activities can be traced back to life and have practical bearing, finally, on living—how we adapt ourselves to society, environment and ultimate values. They are attempts, in fact, on the part of the individual to reconcile and adapt himself to life as he knows it in his time and to find, among the welter of existence, that which can be brought into the radius of his personal vibrations. The ultimate end of this activity is to discover, through the fulfilment of experience, his personal spiritual *meaning*, and in doing so he may incidentally help other less gifted persons to find their own.

How much of life can be brought within the range of one man's mind depends of course upon the depth and power of that mind and upon its integrity of purpose. There is a difference, no doubt, in profundity and breadth, between the mind of a Shakespeare and of a Marvell, but each will create from original chaos his ordered minor world, making his unique contribution to human values.

The poet, then, must live and act as a human being. His specialized function in no way separates him from the rest of humanity. Primarily he is a Man, only secondarily a Poet—the Poet exists for the service of the Man, as poets exist for humanity. The poet's responsibility is to keep his medium flexible and clean, and, since poetry is not a technical exercise merely, to keep his mind honest, his emotions unconfused and his intellect unprejudiced. What is bad in a man's poetry is what is not personal to himself, what under some exterior obedience he has falsified to correspond with ideas or emotions which he has not related personally to his individual vibrations and which therefore appear as inorganic residue unrelated to the essential matter.

Apart from the consideration of pure genius, or heavenly inspiration, what a poet writes depends upon what he *is*, upon the degree of personal integration he has achieved by moral effort and disciplinary training of his faculties. "If you and I love fine poetry," wrote Hopkins to Robert Bridges, "how much more should we not love fine character!" So long as a poet is creative it doesn't matter what his beliefs or notions are (though his creativity will be modified by his beliefs). Creativeness, however, is organic; one must be creative towards experience as well as towards literature, the one springs from the other.

Great poets have always been concerned with human problems, with morality, society, heaven and hell, the nature of reality, and their specifically poetic talents have been employed in the exploration and definition of these concepts. Small poets often fail to grasp the relation of poetry to life and assume its existence in an artificial sphere, a cultural airtight chamber—a direct result of limiting the poet to a poetic rôle instead of installing him in the human. That is to be 'literary'. Poetry and poets to-day stink with this kind of literaryness. The brittle, sophisticated pose is fashionable—to cover minds that are painfully uneasy beneath their knowledgeable veneer. Lots of this veneer needs scraping off.

D. S. Savage

REVIEWS

Songs and Poems by Gavin Ewart. The Fortune Press, 4*s.* 6*d.*

In an age of metaphysics and intellectualization it is a relief to discover a singer. The roots of poetry and the roots of music coincide in the Self, and a poem is not a poem unless it has a song concealed within it. For a young poet to produce an abundance of lyrical work is an encouraging sign, for it shows that his faculties are well rooted and have a chance to grow.

These thirty-eight songs and poems show few traces of the intellectual diseases (imitation of style, imitation of political slogans) which make modern poetry often barren and uninteresting. Influence, notably of Auden, there certainly is. But there is as much influence of Noel Coward and the jazz lyric—which shows an alert and receptive mind, influenced but not enveloped.

Most noticeable is the honesty of these poems and songs—a mind weathering the storms of public school and university, not re-acting by pulling on a communist sou'wester, but keeping up a fresh and individual attitude to all facets of modern life.

In spite of an undercurrent of wistfulness in many poems, it is all light, sophisticated verse, even when it treats of unrequited love. But it is entertaining, sometimes humorous and written with a positive intellectual integrity that is the result of a fully digested experience. This is its value. A positive attitude to real experience is worth a thousand confusions about algebraic abstractions. This positiveness is also a promise of future development—if Gavin Ewart happens to come under a broader influence he may turn his hand to something more significant than light verse, and with success.

Anthony Dickins

Quixotic Perquisitions by George Reavey. The Europa Press, 3*s.* 6*d.*

An enjoyable book of verse if the reader takes it for what it is worth and does not search for qualities that are not there. Slight verse, well written, with no pretence towards any importance as poetry, but a plain statement of the writer's philosophy, which I found interesting. He conceives the modern world as the culmination of the sixteenth century, when Copernican astronomy achieved a revolution in thought and affirmed modern man, who carried the revolution into sociology and found himself in a world of changing values or an "escalator paradise". He points out many of the failings of modern man and is satirical about modern thought and what we call progress.

"Their bellies boil over with brisk indignation
as soon as you mention a truth in a hundred
while love and all its accessories
fills them with imperative peregrination
Squeamish till beer makes them a cesspool of wit
these are my brethren in sabbath attire."

Important for its philosophy, which is common enough to be popular, but of no ultimate significance as poetry.

T.

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QUARTERLY

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No. 2. (*Autumn, 1938*) *contained work by* Wm. Saroyan, Kay Boyle, William Plomer, J. F. Hendry, Laurence Vail, Alfred Perles, Norman McCaig.

No. 3. (*Winter, 1938*) *contains work by* Wallace Stevens, Dylan Thomas, Parker Tyler, Merrill Moore, Philip O'Connor, Dorian Cooke, Nicholas Moore.

No. 4. (*Spring, 1939*) *will contain work by* Conrad Aiken, Boris Pasternak, Dylan Thomas, Hugh MacDiarmid, Rayner Heppenstall, Henry Treece, Antonia White and others.

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